



Directory Can Now Be Accessed Through a Revised Web Address

Users can now access the Directory of DoD Public Health Laboratory Services with a simpler web address:

<http://afip-geis.afip.osd.mil/>

Make sure to add this address to your favorites list.

Leishmaniasis: The New Threat to Troops Deployed In the Middle East

Leishmaniasis, a parasitic disease transmitted by the bite of the sand fly, is a preventable disease that can present itself in two forms, the more common skin form called cutaneous leishmaniasis and a more serious form called visceral leishmaniasis. The cutaneous form causes skin lesions that are treatable, but may take months to heal and may cause permanent disfigurement. Visceral leishmaniasis causes a fever, weakness, swollen glands, an enlarged spleen, and a lowered blood count. This form is generally fatal if left untreated. Sandfly populations are heaviest in Central Iraq, where service members are reporting as many as 100 sandfly bites per person, although only 2-3% of these sandflies carry this disease.



With preventative measures being taken such as providing troops with permethrin treated uniforms and DEET, there have only been a handful of cutaneous leishmaniasis cases reported in Iraq and Afghanistan. Conversely, Operation Desert Storm produced twenty cases of cutaneous and twelve cases of visceral leishmaniasis in soldiers. Because this disease may not manifest in the body until months after initial infection, there should be heightened awareness and knowledge of potential symptoms. These symptoms include sores that do not heal, or, in the case of visceral leishmaniasis, a combination of fever, anemia, gastrointestinal problems, or abnormal liver tests. More information about this disease can be found on the Directory Website or <http://www.geis.ha.osd.mil/>.

Variant Avian Influenza Strains Spread To United States, Low Threat to Humans

Mild strains of avian influenza were reported last month in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New Jersey. These strains, H7N2 and H2N2, are different than the highly pathogenic strain affecting Southeast Asia. Also in February, a strain that is highly contagious and fatal in chickens was reported in flocks near San Antonio,

Texas. Experts say that this strain, H5N2, presents a low health risk to humans. H5N2 is not as virulent as the H5N1 strain in Southeast Asia and there is no evidence of an epidemiological link between the two.

For more up-to-date information on this virus, click on the DoD-GEIS Homepage: <http://www.geis.ha.osd.mil/>.

SAFMLS and ICEID Meetings A Success

The Society of Armed Forces Medical Laboratory Scientists wrapped up its 31st annual meeting in Boston on February 25. This year's theme, "One Government, One Laboratory", focused on current laboratory medicine developments within the military. The International Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases was held on February 29- March 3 at the Marriott Marquis in Atlanta. This 4th biannual conference hosted public health professionals from all

over the world to discuss global emerging infectious disease issues. Panel sessions and posters covered topics ranging from "Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome: the First Pandemic of the 21st Century" to "Economic and Political Impact of Emerging Infectious Diseases". Surveillance, communication, prevention and control of emerging infectious diseases were constant themes of these sessions.